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Working in the

Economic

Research

Service



#### A look at the Economic Research Service

Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman established the Economic Research Service in 1961 to have a single source of agricultural economic information in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. But, economic research and analysis have long been an important part of USDA's mission.

In 1922, Secretary Henry C. Wallace brought economic and statistical work together in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. One of the Bureau's first initiatives was to hold annual outlook conferences to forecast trends in agricultural production and prices. Those conferences still continue. The Bureau was a leader in developing economic and other methodology and at one point was responsible for planning functions within USDA. BAE also fostered agricultural economics departments in the land-grant universities.



In 1953, Secretary Ezra Taft Benson divided responsibility for USDA's economic analysis among several agencies, but by 1961, officials decided that concentrating such work in one agency would better serve the Department.

Since 1961, ERS has provided analysis and data to other Federal agencies and departments, Congress, universities, farm groups, agribusiness, and the general public. The work of ERS has shifted to meet the needs of an agricultural sector that has become increasingly efficient,

highly capitalized, and more dependent on exports. Earlier emphasis on marketing economics and firm-level studies gave way to more national and regional policy-oriented research and more foreign trade analysis. Concerns with the environment, human health, and rural development have also led to major ERS research projects.

Many ERS studies have significantly influenced policy and program direction. Some of the most notable projects have included studies of the economic effects of trade liberalization and producer subsidies, the structure of U.S. agriculture, rural-urban migration and population flows, and the first world food budget. Those and other ERS analyses have been important in farm policy debates.

Today, ERS research encompasses commodities, natural resources and technology, foreign markets, and rural areas. Its staff includes sociologists, political scientists, and other social scientists in addition to economists.



#### Realize your goals with the

#### Economic Research Service

". . . Information and analysis for improving the performance of agriculture and rural America."

ork with a group of people dedicated to strengthening U.S. agriculture, the environment, and rural America through developing and publishing the best possible information for decisionmakers at all levels, public and private.

Your work can influence highlevel Federal policymakers and program managers, members of Congress, and the general public. Forge working partnerships with colleagues at universities and other agencies and organizations throughout the United States and around the world. Expand your skills and knowledge with stimulating assignments.

Secure your future in a job with good benefits.

Live close to outstanding cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities.





Work with some of the finest professionals in agricultural economics, economics, social sciences, and computer sciences

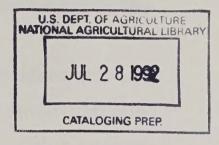
Agricultural Economists	392
Secretaries	42
Economists	42
Computer Specialists	53
Statistical Assistants	40
Clerk Typists	6
Branch Office Managers	17
Economics Assistants	3
Office Automation Assistants	13
Sociologists	11
Administrative Assistants	26
Historians	7
Social Science Analysts	6
Computer Assistants	4
Statisticians	4
Budget Assistants	2
Program Analysts	2
Geographers	3
Technical Information Specialists	2
Operations Research Analysts	2
Attorney	1
Mathematician	1

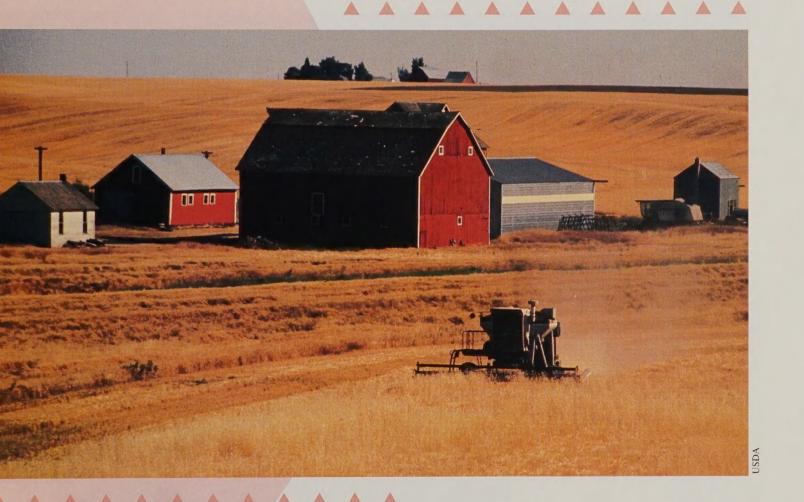
mployees of the U.S. Department of ▲ Agriculture's Economic Research Service help people in all the many facets of the U.S. agriculture and agribusiness sectors, in natural resources and the environment, and in rural development and demography. ERS' highly trained researchers and support staff study and analyze issues related to natural resource use and conservation; environmental policy; commodity production; food and fiber processing, distribution, marketing, and consumption; international agricultural trade; and economic development, income, poverty, and population of rural America.

ERS gives you the chance to work with experts in your field, whether it's rural population or natural resource economics, for example.

The ERS headquarters is near numerous other research institutions where you may confer with colleagues in your field. For example, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, other USDA agencies, and most of the executive branch of the Federal Government are within a mile of ERS, as are many private and nonprofit institutions and constituency groups.









## Provide analyses needed by top Federal officials, members of Congress, and the general public

RS staff members have earned a reputation for providing valuable economic analysis. Thus, lawmakers and high-level members of the executive branch often turn to ERS for information on the costs and benefits of new or proposed legislation or programs affecting the food and fiber system or rural America.

Whenever Congress considers such legislation, ERS extensively analyzes existing programs and estimates the future effects of the proposals. ERS staff members also frequently provide background information for USDA officials,

such as the Secretary of Agriculture and the Assistant Secretary for Economics.

The results of ERS analysis usually appear in a wide variety of publications, staff papers, and data products that are provided to the requesting officials and to interested members of the public.

ERS analysts have contributed to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and have taken a lead role in developing the U.S. Government's economic research program on global change.



ERS analysis has also provided information on the effects of alternative international trade policies for use in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations.

Many ERS analysts make presentations at USDA's annual Outlook Conference. This meeting draws policymakers and industry leaders from around the world.



A

Washington Convention and Visitors Association



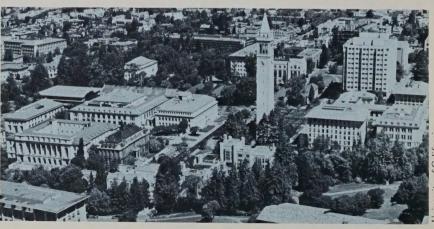
# Work with colleagues at universities, State and local governments, other Federal agencies, and foreign governments



RS employees have many opportunities to share their expertise and experience with other professionals in similar disciplines in various settings throughout the world. Some recent assignments have included the following:

- ▲ Serving on committees of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, France.
- ▲ A 1-year assignment at Australia's Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics.
- ▲ Consulting trips to government agriculture organizations in Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union, Costa Rica, China, Mexico, India, and Jamaica.

- A Serving on national research panels and programs such as Presidential initiatives on water quality, food safety, global change, and rural development.
- A Representing ERS and USDA at intergovernmental and professional meetings throughout the United States and in Canada, England, Ethiopia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Philippines, and Thailand.
- ▲ Temporary assignments to other Federal organizations, including the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Office of Management and Budget, Council of Economic Advisors, Office of Thrift Supervision, and USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and Office of the Secretary.



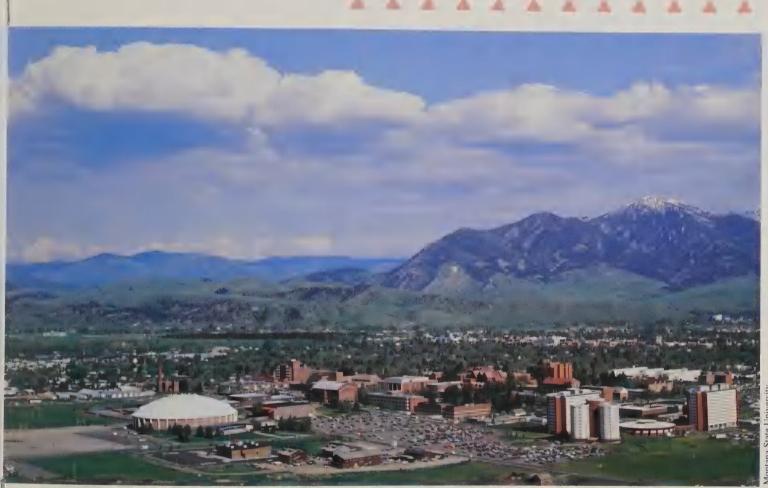
niversity of California

ERS often invites distinguished faculty members from U.S. universities for extended stays at the Washington, D.C., head-quarters so that staff members may benefit from the wealth of knowledge these academicians have accumulated.

ERS staff members themselves occasionally take assignments at universities, where they participate in cooperative research programs with faculty members and students.

Through cooperative research agreements, ERS staff members regularly work with other economists and social scientists at universities throughout the United States and around the world.

Representatives from foreign governments and national and international organizations regularly visit ERS to learn more about the agency's programs firsthand. Some foreign visitors have extended stays during which they work closely with ERS staff on projects related to agriculture in their countries.



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### Broaden your knowledge through varied work assignments

RS researchers provide diverse analytical products that draw on broad areas of knowledge and many skills.

Many individuals regularly analyze periodically released data on such topics as commodity production; agricultural input use; farm costs, returns, and income; rural population, employment, unemployment, and earnings; international agricultural trade; land use; natural resources and the environment; and food consumption and expenditures.

- ▲ Staff members develop and apply new economic models.
- ▲ Many analysts study proposed legislation to determine costs and benefits to the farm sector and the general public.

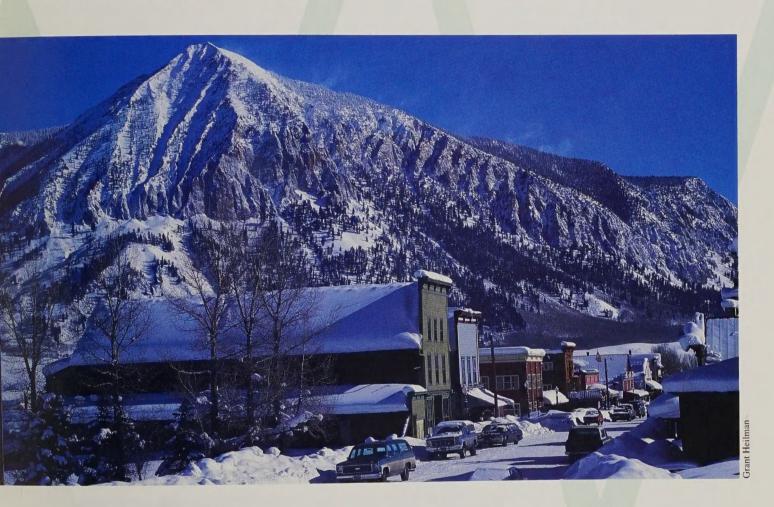
- All ERS employees have access to a sophisticated network of microcomputers and mainframe systems, providing desktop access to analytical tools, databases, word processing, and communications.
- A Skilled analysts support programming, analytical modeling, software training and troubleshooting, and hardware repair.
- A Support staff use computer equipment to produce statistical analyses and graphic illustrations for high-level executive and legislative presentations and publications.



ERS is one of the largest publishers in USDA. Each year, ERS publishes numerous research monographs and staff reports and the following magazines and other periodicals: Agricultural Outlook, Economic Indicators of the Farm Sector, Farmline, Food Review, Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States, Rural Development Perspectives, Rural Conditions and Trends, Journal of Agricultural Economics Research, World Agriculture.

ERS also publishes the following situation and outlook reports: Agricultural Income and Finance, Agricultural Resources, Agriculture and Trade Reports, Aquaculture, Cotton and Wool, Dairy, Feed, Fruit and Tree Nuts, Oil Crops, Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Exports, Rice, Sugar and Sweeteners, Tobacco, Vegetables and Specialties, and Wheat.

Each year, ERS staff members author more than 1,000 publications, speeches, and papers.





#### The Other Benefits of

#### Working in ERS



orking in ERS can offer the intangible benefits of professional accomplishment and personal satisfaction. But it also offers some very tangible benefits, such as the following:

#### Health and life insurance.

Health and life insurance plans are optional. If an employee enrolls, the costs are shared by the employee and ERS.

Retirement plan. The retirement plan is made up of three components—a Federal retirement fund, Social Security, and the tax-deferred Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)—into which both the employee and ERS make contributions. TSP participants may contribute up to 10 percent of their pay to the plan.

The Government contributes 1 percent for each employee and matches up to 5 percent for TSP participants.

#### Flexible work schedules.

Eight- or 9-hour days with flexible starting and ending times help employees join carpools and manage other activities that compete for their time.

**Paid vacation.** You will earn 13 days of annual leave per year for the first 3 years, 20 days per year after 3 years, and 26 days per year after 15 years.

**Sick leave.** You will earn 13 days of sick leave per year throughout your career.



#### Leave donation program.

Sometimes employees are faced with personal or family circumstances in which they need to take considerably more annual or sick leave than they have accrued. Coworkers may now donate up to half what they would earn in 1 year to help that person.

**Holidays.** You will be paid for 10 Federal holidays each year.

Recognition. ERS has an active awards program featuring honorary awards for major contributions, end-of-the-year bonuses for excellent performance throughout the year, and cash awards for significant accomplishments.

Training programs. ERS offers several avenues for continuing your education. Short-term technical training may take place in the office, in one of several locations in the headquarters complex, or away from the office. ERS may also pay for college courses that are related to employees' jobs.

**Credit union.** A full-service branch of the Agriculture Federal Credit Union is available in the ERS headquarters building.

**Child care.** Several child care centers are conveniently located near the ERS head-quarters.

#### Wellness programs. A

health unit operated by the U.S. Public Health Service is located within the ERS head-quarters. In addition to acute care for on-the-job illness or injury, the health unit offers vaccinations, health screenings, and other programs. An exercise facility provided by ERS is also located within the building.

**Employee Assistance Program.** Personal difficulties may occasionally interfere with one's work. ERS offers confidential, expert assistance to deal with problems such as financial difficulties, drug or alcohol abuse, and marital or family discord.

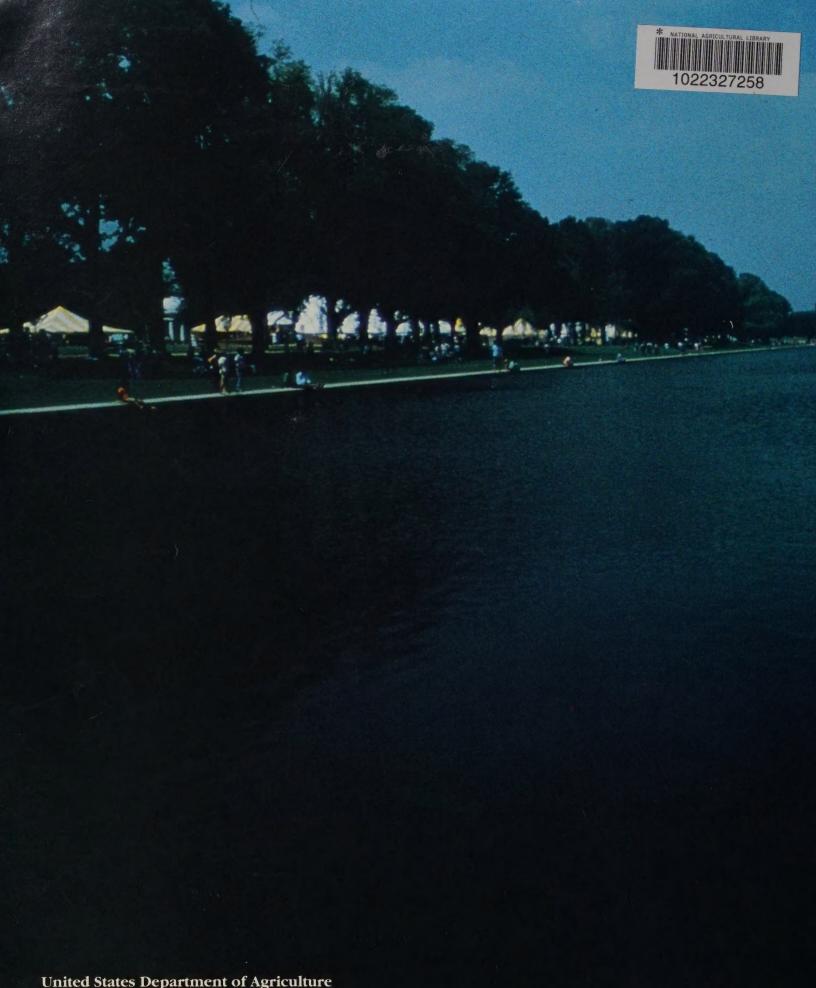
Honoring diversity. ERS celebrates the contributions of the diverse racial and ethnic groups that make up its work force and the U.S. public during annual observances of occasions such as Black History Month, Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, and Hispanic Heritage Month.

#### For more information on career opportunities in USDA's Economic Research Service, contact

USDA, Economics Management Staff, Examining Unit, Room 1443, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3500. Or call 202-720-3660.

ERS Is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified applicants who are U.S. citizens will receive consideration without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability, or any other nonmerit factor. ERS is building a diverse work force committed to excellence in public service.





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